

Grand Jury Room, The Courts, Carlisle 25 Feb 2016

In the morning training session of this indoor meeting, David Gibson and Chris Graham led a discussion on sample projects in the **Rights of Way Improvement Programme (ROWIP)**, with the aim of identifying those factors which lead to a project succeeding or failing.

At **Harrington, the Community Walkway** is a successful ROWIP project, which now provides improved access to a school. Success factors are that it was a community led scheme, achievable, and now that the footpath is surfaced, drained and ramped Cumbria County Council has only small maintenance costs from annual vegetation strimming. By contrast the desire to re-open the **Waverly line railway bridge** over the River Eden, to the west of Carlisle, has stalled as a ROWIP project. It poses problems of access at each end of the bridge and its safety is in some doubt following the December 2015 floods. **Longtown Steps**, a flight of ancient sandstone steps have failed as a ROWIP project as no funding was identified, and the steps are a Highways not Countryside Access (CA) responsibility to maintain. Successful ROWIP schemes need to come from users, ideally who have done some talking to landowners, done some risk assessment and identified other sources of funding. It was a very helpful discussion.

In the formal afternoon meeting members raised fewer points than normal, as colder, wetter weather had not been conducive to walking, cycling or horse riding. Monitoring CCC Health and Well Being Board meetings was not being effective; local committees are where CLAF should be targeting information on how rights of way act as determinants of health. Members heard that the CA team had been deflected to flood recovery work for the past month or so. Landslip sites are of concern, as most are still too unsafe to monitor. Following the floods Cumbria Flood Recovery will be looking more to the greater use of volunteers, for example for checking the state of Cumbria's over 5000km of footpaths. It was sad to learn that CCC Countryside Access had lost two additional staff in the latest round of cuts. All agreed that financial support for Cumbria's flood recovery is needed from national sources.



Harrington Community Walkway



Waverly Line Railway Bridge



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